

CITY OF AUBURN
EXAMINING BOARD OF PLUMBERS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2013

Members Present: Mr. Greg Gallinger, Mr. Steve Bianco, Mr. Carl Castiglione, Mr. Bill Orman

Members Absent: Mr. Frank Siracusa

Staff Present: Kim Bauso, Brian Hicks

Carl Castiglione called the meeting to order on Tuesday, October 8, 2013 at 5:00 p.m.

[Kim Bauso made reminder to Board members to stay on topic during meetings as meeting minutes are recorded and kept by the City Clerk's office and are available upon request to the public. Any discussions which are not pertinent to Plumbing Board business should be saved until the end of meetings during Executive session.]

Mr. Orman: So, I see Kim put a sign on the door downstairs for applicants taking the exam. When are the applications accepted until?

Mr. Castiglione: Today and next Tuesday. We had to push everything back a week but we couldn't cancel this meeting because she wouldn't be able to call these people because we don't know who they are.

Mr. Orman: Have people called, Kim? For applying for the exam.

Kim Bauso: Yes. I knew there was at least one coming tonight. I spoke to his secretary this morning. I didn't know the names for any others. A lot of people either stop in for the application or call and ask that one be mailed to them. I'm guessing there's about three or four out there.

Mr. Castiglione: So there might be more next Tuesday.

Kim Bauso: Tonight was the date for the application cut-off but we didn't make the deadline for publication in The Citizen which means we had to offer another chance for other possible applicants so you'll have to meet again next Tuesday at 5:00.

Mr. Orman: So after next Tuesday night applications are cut off for the test?

Kim Bauso: Yes. Have you notified Frank about that? I didn't do letters because it was a Special Meeting being held just to accept applications.

[One applicant showed up on 10/8/13 to apply for the Master Plumber exam. Eric Austin's application was subsequently denied for sufficient lack of proof of employment and later withdrawn for the exam altogether by the applicant.]

Mr. Oman: I was seeing when I reviewed the last meeting's minutes that there was some discussion about the senior housing project up there on Standart. Does Armani have employees registered with the City, Kim, you know when it's renewal time, do they provide that to you? As far as Apprentices and Journeyman.

Kim Bauso: Yes, he does. They have one of the most I think. Like three pages.

[Inaudible discussion between Board members regarding Armani Plumbing]

Mr. Castiglione: I had Denys Thompson in my office three weeks ago discussing the job. He is not retired. He didn't sell the business. He has full ownership of that business. He owns Armani, full. I did an inspection there last week, two of his men were there. They did all the underground. They're the ones working that job.

Mr. Bianco: Well, that's fine I guess but rumor had it...

Mr. Castiglione: Yeah, those rumors...

Mr. Bianco: Well, you got to follow up on them, don't you? Now we know.

Mr. Orman: The other thing that was brought up before, Brogan Manor. Who's doing that one?

Mr. Castiglione: Armani's doing it.

Mr. Bianco: Is there any reason we, the Plumbing Board can get a list each month from you, who's doing what jobs so we don't have to ask you all the time. It's all so secret. Why can't the Board know what's going on in the City? I want to know what's going on. Period.

Mr. Hicks: I don't see why you can't. It's not a secret, it is public knowledge. But we have a lot of jobs going on at any one given time.

Mr. Bianco: I only care about plumbing. The plumbing permits, that's all I want to get my hands on.

Mr. Hicks: It's all kept in the computer but we don't normally run a daily, weekly or monthly list of those....

Mr. Bianco: Well, when we come in to get a permit, where are those sheets kept? Why can't you make copies of all those sheets and bring them to the Board meetings so we can all know what jobs are going on? Why would that be so hard?

Mr. Orman: Steve, they're only open Tuesdays and Thursdays to get permits and Kim is the only one...

Mr. Hicks: Well, we'd have to see if we could do a list instead of having a permit for every one of them. We're in a DOS system not a Windows system, you got to understand that. We'd have to IT come in to run something, right Kim? This is why it appears to you that we're not giving you the information that you want.

Mr. Bianco: Well, it would be nice so we know who's doing what job and if they're licensed.

Mr. Hicks: We can't issue a permit unless they're a licensed person, you understand that, right?

Mr. Bianco: Well, like you said "public information" and I believe there should be some way for us to get that you know.

Mr. Hicks: Well, I've been waiting fifteen years for a "go back" button.

Kim Bauso: Steve, I've made a note about it. I'll look into it.

Mr. Bianco: I just think we should be more responsible as the Plumbing Board. We come to this meeting every month, we don't accomplish anything, we don't enforce anything. We should be more involved with what's going on. That's just my opinion.

Mr. Gallinger: I think we've accomplished something. With the licensing, people registering their employees.

Mr. Bianco: I just think it's gotten worse lately. We used to have guys come to these meetings. No one comes anymore. I've been on this Board for over fifteen years and it seems things are just falling apart. No one gets their permits anymore with the office being only open Tuesdays and Thursdays or whatever.

Kim Bauso: Can I just tell you as a sidebar real quick, we tried putting in a request to get that other clerical position filled again so that we could be open five days a week again. The manager said he's only had *two* complaints since April so he doesn't see the need. So you guys discuss it *here* but you actually have to make a complaint and take it somewhere that it's going to make a difference.

Mr. Orman: What were the complaints, Kim? Too much time at the counter or what?

Kim Bauso: I actually don't know.

Mr. Hicks: It's turned into an honesty program actually with the permits. If you're doing a job on the off day, then you have to come in after the fact on the first day we're open to get the permit. But the Code actually says, "you do a job without the permit, the permit fee is supposed to be doubled".

Mr. Orman: We're seeing this every day now, the guys aren't licensed and they're not getting their permits and they know they're supposed to. It's getting really frustrating.

Mr. Gallinger: And that's why we can't get the other plumbers involved now.

Mr. Bianco: It's a problem, no one's involved now.

Mr. Hicks: Just keep doing what you're doing. You see someone out we need to check out, you call us, we do our best to send someone out right away, to catch them in the act. The problem I'm having right now, Carl is only part time, and now I only have Steve and Lane and they're handling *all* CO inspections, they're dealing with all the tenant complaints, all the grass complaints, trash, all of that, and

they can't keep up with construction inspections. Where we're supposed to be, we can't be. We need more man power. I'm not talking an army. Kim needs help on her end, we need more time/guys on the road. We have no support.

Mr. Bianco: It's not getting any better. It's gotten way worse here. There's no reinforcement here whatsoever. I know these local plumbers have been seeing it the way I have.

[Discussion going on pertaining to the upcoming sale and renovations at Oak Creek Town Home.]

Mr. Orman: Kim, have you noticed how you're tracking as far as if there's been a drop in permits?

Kim Bauso: There has not been a drop in permits. We're right on track to issue the same number of plumbing permits as we do every year.

Mr. Bianco: Kim, how do you track that?

Kim Bauso: By permit number. By the receipt number that corresponds to the permit number.

Mr. Bianco: That's kinda what I was getting at. I knew you had to have a way to track that.

Kim Bauso: We're talking about two different things. I can track them by number. The number of permits is the number of receipts that I go through. I'm talking numerically. You're talking about names, addresses and descriptions. I'm only taking about a number. And I can tell you that number is the same as other years.

Mr. Bianco: When did we start this hour change?

Kim Bauso: April.

Mr. Bianco: Any decrease since then?

Kim Bauso: No. When I do the monthly accounting I can see the numbers.

Mr. Bianco: Is that something you can bring to show me?

Kim Bauso: Well it would only be dollar amounts. Is that something I could bring? You tell me.

Mr. Hicks: It's still public knowledge.

Kim Bauso: Okay.

Mr. Bianco: It would be nice for my own information to see how much it's changed since the hours decreased.

Kim Bauso: It hasn't. Building permits either. We're still right in the same range for both as far as number issued.

Mr. Bianco: Doesn't make sense. That's building though. How about the plumbing permits? You don't know that number, right?

Kim Bauso: I do. That's what I just said. I track everything. Plumbing permits are exactly the same probably within twenty permits every year.

Mr. Orman: The test is that for both licenses?

Mr. Castiglione: Yes. Same day.

Mr. Orman: Have we sent Roto-Rooter letters before in the past?

Mr. Castiglione: Yes.

Mr. Orman: There's a customer who called me that said that they came in and looked at the job, and it was a mess, and this other company was way too high. I got done talking to her and she ended up telling me Roto-Rooter gave her a price to come in and replace all the piping in her basement, water lines, drain lines, venting.

Mr. Castiglione: Do you know her name and the address?

Mr. Orman: I can call you with that.

Mr. Castiglione: He hasn't done anything yet, has he?

Mr. Orman: No. But how many others is he getting away with? I see their trucks around all the time.

Mr. Hicks: They can clean out sewer lines, can't they?

Mr. Orman: Yes. Absolutely.

Mr. Hicks: I had one over the weekend. Roto-Rooter had come in to clean the line.

Mr. Bianco: I've also seen Roto-Rooter get a job in the City of Auburn then hire a licensed plumber. N. Hoopes. Fletcher. Across the street from my house.

Mr. Castiglione: So the one you're talking about, Billy is Roto-Rooter? I want to make sure I call the right guy.

Mr. Orman: Yeah. Roto-Rooter. Billy, give me a call tomorrow with that woman's name and address.

Mr. Bianco: Well, there's some of my frustrations. Want to make sure everybody knows about it.

Mr. Orman: To that end, talking about the counter only being open a couple days a week, before the summer, we had some discussion around how to streamline this process, and in reviewing my notes, I did write some ideas down, some of the thoughts I had about being able to mail permits in and about all

permits needing to be in place before a start work order has been issued, that type of thing. I don't know if we can go any further with that. Was it Jenny here? When she came to talk to us. She was going to petition something to the City Manager.

Mr. Castiglione: She never got back with us.

Mr. Orman: Well, I think we dropped the ball on that too. We were supposed to put something together for her.

Kim Bauso: We're in the early stages of getting new software that someone else picked out for us.

Mr. Hicks: My understanding is they decided on a program that they feel will work for our department. They're in the process of trying to implement and bring things together. It will have to be tweaked and we do have to buy equipment. The goal is not only plumbing permits but every other permit through our department will be done the same way so people don't have to come in on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The problem I'm having is that no matter what permit it is, somebody still has to handle it and look at it and say "this is approved", "they're licensed", "they're not licensed", "you can't build this" ...there still has to be a set of eyes on it. Evidently, they don't see that. These people think they can get a permit 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and they're going to get a response right away, somebody still has to take it off the website and someone still has to review it. None of that has been thought of yet. We were not really involved in this whole process.

Mr. Orman: Well, who's the IT guy who looked into this?

Mr. Hicks: We have a part-time guy who comes in two days a week.

Kim Bauso: And he's AS400 only. That's his program.

Mr. Bianco: How far away is this? This year or you talking in the future?

Mr. Hicks: We're going to be paying for it for the coming year but I think we still need to get some equipment.

Mr. Bianco: So you're going to own the system but you can't run it?

Mr. Hicks: Right.

Mr. Castiglione: Before we go we have to approve the last meeting's minutes.

Mr. Orman: I wasn't here so you guys go ahead.

[Minutes approved]

Kim Bauso: All right the next meeting is Tuesday, November 12th. That's the regular meeting and then don't forget, next Tuesday, October 18th is a Special Meeting just for applications. So I won't record anything, there'll be no business, we'll just be here in case there is any more applicants for the exam.

Mr. Bianco: When's the test?

Kim Bauso: Following week I believe, the 22nd. At 8 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 6pm.

